(क) क्या सरकार को इस बात की जानकारी है कि संचार विभाग द्वारा अपने ठेकेदारों की मार्फत "कुल्लु-मंडी राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग" पर केबल फाइबर बिछाने हेतु खुदाई का काम समुचित ढंग से नहीं किया जा रहा है;

(ख) क्या सरकार को इस बात की भी जानकारी है कि उक्त काम को अव्यवस्थित रूप से किये जाने के फलस्वरूप जनसाधारण का चलना और वाहनों का आना-जाना खतरे से खाली नहीं है;

(ग) क्या यह सच है कि उपर्युक्त कारण से इस राजमार्ग पर अनेक छुट-पुट दुर्घटनाएं हो चुकी हैं और गत दो महीनों में इन खाइयों में गिरने से दो व्यक्तियों की मृत्यु भी हो चुकी है; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो विभाग द्वारा इन असुविधाओं को दूर करने और वहां ऐसी दुर्घटनाओं की पुनरावृत्ति को रोकने के लिए क्या कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं?

संचार मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री सुखराम): (क) जी, नहीं। ठेकेदारों द्वारा कार्य व्यवस्थित ढंग से किया जा रहा है। जैसा कि देश के अन्य भागों में किया जा रहा है, कुल्लू-मंडी खण्ड में भी आप्टिकल फाइबर केबल ठेकेदारों के माध्यम से बिछाये जा रहे हैं।

(ख) जी हां। दुर्गम भू-भाग होने और इस क्षेत्र की सड़कें तंग होने के कारण तथा आप्टिकल फाइबर की सुरक्षा की जरूरत को ध्यान में रखते हुए, कार्य सुव्यवस्थित रूप से किया जा रहा है। तथापि, सड़क प्रयोक्ताओं के लिए सावधानी बरतना अनिवार्य हो गया है।

(ग) जी हां। अब तक न तो कोई ऐसा दृष्टान्त हमारे ध्यान में आया है और न ही राज्य सरकार से इस संबंध में कोई शिकायत हमें प्राप्त हुई है।

(घ) हिमाचल प्रदेश की, विशेषकर कुल्लू-मण्डी खण्ड की भौगोलिक परिस्थितियों को ध्यान में रखते हुए इस कार्य पर एक सहायक इंजीनियर के नेतृत्व में कर्मचारियों के एक दल द्वारा लगातार निगरानी रखी जा रही है। इसके अलावा चेतावनी की घडियां, चेतावनी बत्तियां और सावधान रहने के अनुदेशों वाले बोर्ड भी लगाये जाते हैं। यह कार्य मार्च, 1994 तक पूरा होने की संभावना है।

**97. [Transferred to 4th March 94].*

Foreign Exchange Earnings from Private Airlines

*98. SHRI M.A. BABY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the foreign exchange earnings made through each private airlines in India for the last twelve months; and

(b) the foreign exchange outflow of each private airlines in India for the same period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Credit Delivery System in Rural Sector

*99. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE: SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the RBI has decided to modify the credit delivery system in the rural sector by providing a greater role to non-Government Organisations and self-help groups; and

(b) if so, what are the precise changes effected in this regard and what difficulties and shortcomings are proposed to be overcome thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS) DR. ABRAR AHMED): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have reported that there is no proposal to modify the credit delivery system in rural sector. Banks continue to finance borrowers directly as hitherto. However, with a view to improving access of the poor to bank credit, it has been considered advantageous to link the rural

poor to the formal banking system through intermediaries, like Self-Help Groups (SHGs)/Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) has launched a pilot project, with the approval of RBI under which 500 SHGs are expected to be covered. NABARD provides refinance to the banks which provide finance to SHGs under the pilot project. Some departure from the usual banking norms has been made under the pilot project and flexibility has been given to the members of the group to decide about the norms of lending to their own members. The bank loan is given in lumpsum to the group and an individual member need not go to the bank to execute any document to obtain the loan. Linking of the poor with the banks through SHGs NGOs is expected to reduce the transaction cost for banks, facilitate better appraisal, better supervision monitoring and provide prompt and need based credit to the poor.

Duty on Stainless Steel Items

*100 SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR
SAMBHAJI RAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appeared in the Hindustan Times of 2nd February, 1994 captioned, "Steel Units misusing excise duty tariff" to the effect that producers of stainless steel are taking advantage of the difference in duties leviable on stainless steel items and alloy steel bars and rods;

(b) if so, the total estimated loss of excise on this account; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to avoid losses on this account?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M.V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTY): (a) to (c) Attention of Government has been drawn to a news item which appeared in the February 2, 1994, issue of the Hindustan Times alleging that some steel firms in the North are mis-declaring "staninless steel bars and roads" as "other alloy steel" products and thereby clearing them at lower rate of duty.

The position is that the Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985, makes a distinction between "stainless steel" and "other alloy steel" products. The composition of products emanating from these two categories is different and they are also known differently in the market. Different rates of duty have been prescribed for them. The Harmonised System of Nomenclature also makes a distinction between the two categories. Accordingly, different rates of duty have been prescribed for each category.

Products of stainless steel are leviable to an ad valorem duty at 12.5% whereas most of those made of other alloy steel pay a specific rate of duty of Rs. 1,000 per Metric Tonne, which is lower than the former. (Some products made of other alloy steel are also chargeable at 12.5%). A differential in duty, with a lower rate for products of "other alloy steel" has been prevalent for some time (Pre-Budget position).

Mis-declaration of stainless steel products as those of "other alloy steel" amounts to an Offence and is liable to action under the Central Excise Law. There are six cases alleging such mis-declaration amounting to evasion of duty of Rs. 13.62 Crores which have been detected and show cause notices issued.

Commmemorative Postal Stamp on Late Padmashri Anant Gopal Sheorey

785. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state: